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SCIENCE

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 1888.

WE HAVE THE GREATEST SYMPATHY with those educators who are endeavoring to secure the introduction of science-teaching into the public schools. We would advocate this addition to the present curriculum, not only because of the interest and value of scientific knowledge as such, but because of its value as general information. A great deal of that which is incorporated under the head of elementary science is really general information, and as such should be in the possession of every child in the grammar-schools of the country. We regard the little book entitled 'Introductory Steps in Science,' by the late Paul Bert, as invaluable in this connection, and the English translation should be in every school. Nowhere else are the facts stated as simply, as clearly, and as comprehensively as in this little book. That this subject is beginning to attract the attention which it deserves, is evident. At a recent meeting of the American Society of Naturalists at New Haven it was elaborately and enthusiastically discussed, and now a valuable impetus is to be given to this movement among the teachers themselves by the proposition of the *Academy*, which is one of the best journals of secondary education published in this or any other country, to give a prize of fifty dollars for the best essay on 'Science in Secondary Schools.' The effect of this offer will be to stimulate the teachers of the country to investigate the subject in its practical bearing. It is announced that the committee of awards will give no weight to essays that are merely arguments in favor of science-teaching. This is as it should be, for, unless this condition was made, the majority of the essays would be given over to the threshing of old straw. Contestants are requested to confine themselves simply to the practical exposition of the results arrived at in the schoolroom, and to the best means of obtaining these results. The competition is open to all persons, without regard, as the announcement puts it, "to age, sex, color, or previous condition of servitude," and no paper is to exceed five thousand words in length. All essays must be received at the office of the *Academy*, Syracuse, N.Y., on or before March 15, 1888. We cordially recommend this competition to all persons interested in science-teaching. It gives them an excellent opportunity to be of practical service to the public-school system of the country.

THE MEETING of the Engineers' Club of Philadelphia, Dec. 17, was another instance of the advantage of providing something to eat and smoke at scientific meetings. The secretary, in his report, states that he is glad to be able to announce that both members and guests seem to have been much pleased with their little entertainment. Whereas the usual attendance at the meetings may have varied from a dozen to twenty, the attendance at this meeting amounted to something like three hundred and forty-two. It was not possible to determine exactly. In this case there was no speech-making, or any attempt to introduce any feature which might have deprived the affair of an entirely informal and purely sociable character; but it is believed that the entertainment will be of permanent and substantial benefit to the club. The decline of the old scientific meetings is well illustrated in those held, or attempted to be held, by one of the oldest scientific associations of the country. This association, although it has maintained its existence for more than a hundred years, and has accumulated a library of scientific periodicals and Transactions of societies which is excelled by but one or two in this country, has found it impossible, since the opening of the present season last October, to bring together a

sufficient number to form a quorum for the transaction of any business; in other words, no new members have been elected, because fifteen out of the two hundred members of this society had never been sufficiently of one mind to attend its meetings, which are held in a building easily accessible to a very large proportion of them. This society has, as well, tried the social experiment once or twice, and with promising success; but it certainly seems, that, with the differentiation of the interest and work of scientific men, many of the older general scientific societies must develop some new field in which they may be of service. In large degree they are now publication societies, but, as is well known, there is a great disadvantage in the publication in one volume of a vast mass of heterogeneous material. It frequently amounts to a mere burying of the results.

MODERN-LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION.

THE fifth annual convention of the Modern-Language Association was held under the auspices of the University of Pennsylvania on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, Dec. 28-30. The large attendance of delegates, chiefly from the East and South, but some also from the West, was gratifying as indicative of the steady growth of the organization. But all who came were amply repaid, for the proceedings were both interesting and instructive. The sessions were opened on Wednesday evening with an address of welcome by Provost Pepper of the university, who was followed by Prof. James MacAllister, superintendent of the public schools of Philadelphia. Professor MacAllister spoke on the place of modern literature in the education of our time. It was a discussion of the topic which at present is engaging the attention of pedagogues all over the world, whether the classics should continue to remain the basis of a liberal education or not. Professor MacAllister ranged himself clearly and openly on the side of those who favored the substitution of modern literatures as such a basis in place of the study of Latin and Greek. After tracing the origin of the system of education which was still in vogue in all parts of the universe fifty years ago, to the revival of classical learning in the days of the Renaissance, he argued, that while it was natural for the men of the fifteenth century to go to the classics for satisfying their sense of beauty and their desire for knowledge, for it was the Latin and Greek authors who had set these aspirations and desires in motion, there is no sufficient reason why we, in our days, should go to the same fountain for quenching our thirst. With the achievements of modern nations in the realms of philosophy, poetry, science, and literature, it is strange that we should continue to train the intellect and to stimulate the heart almost exclusively upon works access to which is possible only after prolonged and laborious study of the languages in which they are treasured up. It is true that much has been done during the past decades towards dethroning the classics from the supreme rulership which they formerly exercised. After a good deal of fighting, science has found a place in our system of education, and it is conceded that any scheme of instruction is incomplete that does not provide for the teaching of modern languages; but the controversy is by no means ended. Professor MacAllister claimed that the modern literatures of the world contained all the elements necessary for attaining the aim of culture, which is to "know ourselves and the world," and that sooner or later they must be given the first place in the intellectual culture of our time, and be made the chief instruments of literary training in the schools.

On Thursday morning, after the transaction of routine business, the reading and discussion of papers began, and continued, with an intermission of one hour at noon, until late in the afternoon. The papers on this and the following day were of two kinds, — some of a technical character, giving the results of detailed investigations of some special subject; and others of a more general character,

dealing chiefly with questions affecting the teaching of modern languages. Among the latter was a suggestive treatment of the modern-language seminary system, by Prof. H. S. White of Cornell University.

The purpose of the seminary is to guide the student towards independent investigation; but, in order to do its work properly, the student must first have gone through a preliminary training of no inconsiderable character; and, in the second place, the seminary must be well equipped with the standard editions of the best authors, pamphlets, manuscripts, documents, photographic reproductions of important scenes and monuments, epigraphical material, and the like. In the method of teaching, all study of authors must be based upon a study of the times in which an author wrote.

Professor Kroeh of the Stevens Institute presented a paper on methods of teaching modern languages. After enumerating the various methods which have found followers, and discussing their merits and disadvantages, he pronounced himself in favor of the so-called 'natural method.' The basis of all languages, whether literary or scientific, is the phraseology of every-day life, and this can be learned only by imitation. The 'natural method' proceeds on this principle. But the imperfect training of the ear, or rather the total absence of such training in our schools, causes great difficulties in carrying out this method. The education of young people is still conducted almost exclusively through the eye by means of books. There is so little oral instruction, that the pupils not only do not hear accurately, but have to learn the art of paying attention.

One of the best papers, partaking of this general character, was that by Prof. Albert Smyth of the Philadelphia High School, on American literature in the classroom. "It is certainly discreditable to us that we have done so little towards a faithful and affectionate study of what is purely native and national in our American writings. The text-books, with one or two exceptions, designated for use in schools, show no critical utility and no sense of proportion. This is due to the neglect of the study in the higher classrooms. There are two objects to be reached by a proper attention to this branch: in the first place, it may be highly serviceable in education, because it, more than any other, admits of a complete severance of literature from philology; second, the study would ultimately assist in the development of that literature, and would discipline in it the critical faculty, for it must be admitted that America has not participated in the splendid progress of criticism in Europe during the last twenty years. We are poorest of all in criticism, and when we think of the high service the trained and faithful interpreters of poetry render to a nation, it would be hard for us to overrate the good results that may follow the extension of the English curriculum to include the genesis and brief history of American authorship. It is our precious property to hold the literature of our nation true to the higher ideals of life and its purpose."

There were two papers discussing dialects, by Professor Primer of Charleston, and Sheldon of Harvard University. The former dealt with 'Charleston's provincialisms,' also called 'Charlestonese' by the people in the South: the latter gave specimens of a Canadian French dialect spoken in Maine. In discussing the latter, Professor Elliott of the Johns Hopkins University spoke of the importance of such investigations at the present moment. In a generation or two, all traces of these old dialectical variations, whether in Canada or the South, will probably have disappeared, and, unless they are now accurately noted down from the lips of those speaking these dialects, they will be lost forever to scholars and students of dialectology.

Among the technical papers may be mentioned Professor Colitz's (of Bryn Mawr College) exhaustive essay on the origin of the so-called weak verbs in the Teutonic languages, and Dr. Goebel's review of Paul's 'Principles of *Sprachgeschichte*.' Professor Tolman of Ripon College, Wisconsin, read a paper on the style of Anglo-Saxon poetry. He compares the poetry to "a spirited horse, who takes a few bounds forward, and then stands prancing." Anglo-Saxon poetry is always more than lively, it is intense. Among the peculiarities of Anglo-Saxon poetry, the great scarcity of similes is worthy of note. On the other hand, as a kind of compensation for this defect, we have an abundance of striking poetical synonymes. For instance, the ocean is called such names as 'the

whale's home,' 'the fish's bath,' 'the swan's road,' 'the sail road,' 'the course of the flood,' 'the cup of the waves.' Another striking feature of this poetry is the idealization of the sensual and common. In conclusion, Professor Tolman said that he doubted whether the world has ever seen a purer literature than that covered by Anglo-Saxon poetry.

The proceedings were enlivened by spirited discussions. Before the sessions closed, the convention heard the report of a committee appointed to consider the question of petitioning Congress for a removal of the tariff on foreign books. The committee favored a personal presentation of the subject before the proper Congressional committee, and gave the following as the reasons why the tariff should be removed:—

"The revenue derived from the tax is very inconsiderable, and is wholly unnecessary to the maintenance of government. The theory of protection to domestic industry does not enter into the question. American authors do not desire protection for the reason that books are not merchandise and do not compete with one another. Buyers of books are not governed as ordinary buyers by consideration of price, but by consideration of taste or personal fancy and of special availability for special ends. One book is bought in preference to another, not because it is cheaper, but because it is better. The tax upon foreign books bears heavily upon the class which is least able to meet the financial burden; viz., the professors, teachers, and students. Foreign works, whether in English, French, or German, are absolutely indispensable to these people, and we regard such a tax as is now put upon them as directly harmful to the cause of knowledge and culture of our country. By this book-tariff the 'tools' of our profession are made unnecessarily expensive."

After the election of officers, headed by James Russell Lowell as president, the association adjourned, to meet again during the current year in Cincinnati. The delegates were entertained during their stay by the Historical Association, the Penn Club, and the University of Pennsylvania.

SCARLET-FEVER REPORT.¹—III.

R. STANSBURY SUTTON, M.D., LL.D., Pittsburgh, Penn., says, "I know to a certainty, that, when I was a general practitioner, I conveyed the disease from a babe who died, to an adult woman who recovered. I recall an instance where the little patient played with the cat. The cat carried the infection to other children in a neighboring house, they having caught and played with it, stroking its fur."

Adolph Koenig, M.D., Pittsburgh, Penn., cites the case of a physician who visited his home during his attendance on a course of medical lectures, some hundreds of miles distant. While at home he came in contact with a younger brother suffering from scarlet-fever. About one week after his return to college he was attacked with scarlatinous sore throat, accompanied with fever, and lasting a number of days. He is decidedly in favor of compulsory reports to be made to boards of health, the State to assume the expense; and the legally qualified physician is the only person capable of making such a report. Laymen would undoubtedly often confound other eruptive fever with scarlet-fever.

J. F. Kennedy, M.D., Des Moines, Io., secretary State Board of Health, reports a fatal case of scarlet-fever in the family of a washerwoman, traced to infected clothing. He regards the disease as communicable from the patient until desquamation has fully taken place, the patient thoroughly bathed, and his person and clothing disinfected. From thirty to thirty-five days would be about the period of danger, dating from the beginning of the attack. A case was reported to the State Board of Health in which scarlet-fever was alleged to have broken out in a family, having been contracted from a dress which had been worn two years previously by a child who at that time died of the fever. Attending physicians should be required to report all the facts connected with each case of the disease that comes under their care, especially the cause and source of infection. Dr. Kennedy says, "I have for several years, in cases of scarlet-fever and diphtheria, used as a prophylactic zinc ferri chlor. and glycerine, equal parts, and giving according to age, to all exposed, from ten to forty drops in water every three or

¹ Continued from *Science* of Jan. 6, 1888.